



# IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

An ICOMOS Webinar Series

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## NEWSLETTER

### 1. The Caring for Country webinar series

by Helen Wilson

In this Issue 2 of our newsletter, we introduce Webinar 2 in our series on Caring for Country in the climate crisis, **Climate Change Adaptation for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**, presented by Polly Mitchell and Jason Wilson. We will hear about this project which aims to increase the capacity of NSW Aboriginal communities to discuss and consider adaptation decision-making around climate change impacts. How climate impacts have been addressed recently on traditional land at Narran Lakes in central north New South Wales and how mutual strength, linkages and support have been gained from interaction between scientists and the Joint Management Committee will be discussed. (See 2. for more on this)

The Caring For Country webinars organized by the Caring for Country Committee, led by Helen Wilson and Kerime Danis of Australia ICOMOS, are part of the ICOMOS webinar series. The webinars will address climate change and its impacts on cultural heritage, the land and traditional practices in Oceania. The series will provide an opportunity for the voices of Indigenous people in Oceania to be heard and to discuss Indigenous Heritage, Cultural Landscape and Climate Change in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. The webinar series will be followed by a face-to-face workshop on Caring for Country in Climate Change at GA2023 in Sydney.





IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

## NEWSLETTER

2. Climate  
Change  
Adaptation for  
Aboriginal  
Cultural  
Heritage:

Webinar 2

## 2. Webinar 2: Climate Change Adaptation for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

in the **ICOMOS WEBINAR SERIES**

Speakers: Polly Mitchell and Jason Wilson



Photo credit: Mal Ridges

**Caring For Country Webinars in the ICOMOS WEBINAR SERIES**  
**Webinar 2:**  
**CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION FOR ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE**  
 Rescheduled to Wednesday 8th September 2021, 12.00 noon AEST

(approx. 1 hour 30 mins)

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_jtQkDoitSkKrxk6S8-3T2w](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jtQkDoitSkKrxk6S8-3T2w)

**Please Register at:**

Webinar ID: 871 3554 0226

Webinar password: 217245





## NEWSLETTER

### 2. Climate Change Adaptation for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage:

#### About the webinar

In Webinar 2, **Polly Mitchell** will outline the 'Climate Change Adaptation for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage' project which aims to increase the capacity of NSW Aboriginal communities to discuss and consider adaptation decision-making around climate change impacts. The project uses the most up to date information and co-designed adaptation pathways, to work with Aboriginal communities to identify options for protecting and adapting culture and heritage. The process enables the multiple points of views in the community to be heard, and fosters discussions that can form a considered strategy, rather than reactive response to individual climatic events. Enabling these kinds of discussions, and how strategies and actions are formed as a result, is the goal of this project.

**Jason Wilson** will talk about his work tackling Climate Change Adaptation with the Narran Lakes Joint Management Committee and OEH in this project. Narran Lakes country shows the effects of changes in climates over eons. Recent climate change has impacted Narran Lakes country and the cultural heritage embodied in the country. Mitigation measures have been taken by the Narran Lakes Joint Management Committee to protect this cultural heritage and country.



Photo credit: Mal Ridges





## NEWSLETTER

# Climate Change Adaptation for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage: Speakers



### Polly Mitchell

Polly Mitchell is the Senior Team Leader for Cultural and Ecosystem Adaptation in the NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment. She has a background in biological conservation and engagement with Indigenous communities, and for the past 12 years has been working on climate change adaptation.

She cares deeply about proactive response to climate change for our natural and cultural protection. Her current work program focuses on identifying adaptation actions that can support the continuity of ecosystems, species, tangible and intangible cultural values, landscapes, and practices, from climate change.

She's also a big fan of snails...



## NEWSLETTER

# Climate Change Adaptation for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage: Speakers

### Jason Wilson

I am a 51 year old Aboriginal man (Murri) of the Kennedy-Morgan, and Peter's Families. My Grandfather's country language is Gomilaroi (Barwon River and North-west NSW) and my grandmother's Country language is Youalaroi (Narran River and North-west NSW).



The primary objective of my past and present work is to incorporate Aboriginal Values into water initiatives within the Commonwealth and NSW Governments. I have dedicated my life to stop the 'intergenerational cultural, spiritual and economic genocide' and provide equity for my people.

I have worked in Fisheries both State and Federal. I have assisted in empowering MILDTRIN, NBAN and the CEWO as a Local Engagement Officer, and currently enjoy Chairing the Narran Lakes Joint Management Committee with OEH tackling Climate Change Adaptation.

I love my sport, travel, fishing, eating, friends, having a yarn and capacity building the broader Aboriginal community, last but not least I love my Country and Family. I have always conducted myself according to the strong traditional values that underpin my Aboriginal customs and beliefs, were I'm confident we will make a difference together.



## NEWSLETTER

### 3. The Webinar Program

## 3. The Webinar Program

by Helen Wilson

The webinars in the Caring For Country webinar series will address different aspects and examples of the impact of climate change on lands, Indigenous people and culture. Eight webinars are planned, finishing in early 2022.

Traditional lands and associated cultural practices through the process of caring for country are of fundamental importance for Indigenous peoples. Climate change is impacting on lands, traditional practices and cultural heritage in Oceania and directly and immediately threatening this fundamental relationship.

The first Webinar in the Caring For Country series, 'Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance', was held on 4 August 2021. A link to view this webinar will soon be available on the ICOMOS website at [Webinars by ICOMOS Committees and our partners - International Council on Monuments and Sites](#)

The following webinar 'Burning Country' will discuss the impact of culture and climate change on traditional fire practices and how Indigenous practices can contain the answers to addressing damaged landscapes and climate change.

A following webinar will look at community resilience and traditional practices in the Pacific Islands in adapting to climate changes.



## NEWSLETTER

4. Narren  
Lakes – And  
the water  
returns...

## 4. ...And the water returns

Compiled by Helen Wilson from the Sydney Morning Herald articles cited below.

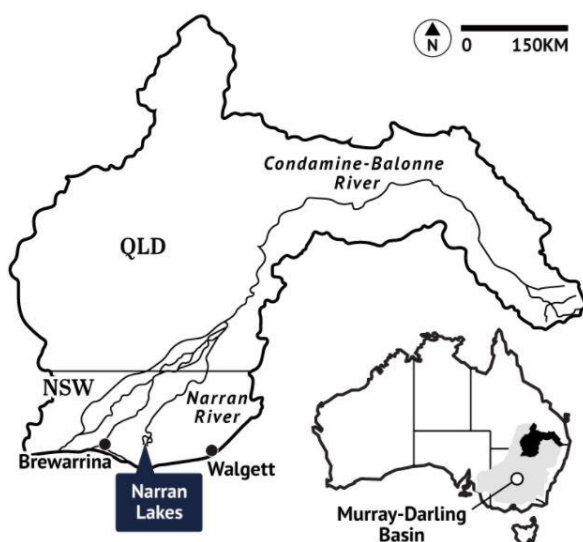


“This would have been the meeting place [for the Yuwaalaraay] with people coming from 200 kilometres,” Jason Wilson, a local indigenous leader and guide, said.

Narran Lakes  
Photo credit:  
Mal Ridges

Big rains that fell hundreds of kilometres to the north in the Condamine-Balonne catchment in February began transforming the Narran Lakes weeks later...but...Still, as in 2013, lake levels are not high enough for as long as is needed to trigger a breeding event of the scale that draws hundreds of thousands of colonial waterbirds such as the straw-necked or glossy ibises.

Narran Lakes at the end of the Condamine-Balonne catchment



See the full article: **'Just magic': First big flows in seven years start key wetland revival** By [Peter Hannam](#), May 15, 2020

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/just-magic-first-big-flows-in-seven-years-start-key-wetland-revival-20200513-p54sqp.html>

And the associated SMH photo essay <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/wetland-revival-20200515-h1o2xi.html>

Source: Biological Conservation.





## NEWSLETTER

5. But is adding environmental water enough...

### 5. But is adding environmental water to our Ramsar affected wetlands in drought enough?

Compiled by Helen Wilson from the Sydney Morning Herald articles cited below.

Professor Pittock asks *Are we putting the right amount of water in the right place at the right time? ... The answer is 'no'.* (See [Flow to nowhere: the disconnect between environmental watering and the conservation of threatened species in the Murray–Darling Basin, Australia](#) by Ryan, A, Colloff, M and Pittock, J.)

Richard Kingsford, a conservation biologist at the University of NSW said: *We need regular reporting on key measures such as amount of flooding, health of flood dependent vegetation and a range of potential other measures such as waterbird, frog and fish communities, adding that many ecological indicators for Ramsar sites are in decline.*

*Issues such as floodplain harvesting, poor protection of environmental flows until recently, climate change and the building of new dams and weirs are just undermining the benefits of the Basin Plan, also affecting many Ramsar sites, he said.*

The information in this newsletter comes from the SMH articles below. See the link below to read more about this issue: <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/the-fish-and-bird-species-at-risk-from-our-failure-to-manage-wetlands-20210528-p57w78.html>



Narran Lakes  
Photo credit:  
Mal Ridges





## NEWSLETTER

### 6. Caring For Country Committee

## 5. Caring For Country Committee: Pacific and Indigenous Voices on Culture, Heritage and the Climate Crisis

by Helen Wilson and Kerime Danis  
Co-Convenors, Caring For Country Committee

The Caring For Country Committee has been operating since June 2020.

The Committee comprises mostly ICOMOS members, both Indigenous and non-indigenous, from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. We were recently accepted by Australia ICOMOS as an 'official' committee, the '[CARING FOR COUNTRY COMMITTEE, a Working Group of Australia ICOMOS](#)'.

We are working in the Climate Change, Cultural Heritage and Indigenous area and are busy organizing a series of webinars in 2021-2022..

### *Our Membership:*

The Committee will run until GA2023 and conclude its work after the General Assembly in Sydney in 2023 (GA2023). We have invited Indigenous and non-indigenous members from Australia and the Pacific and we currently are looking for more members in NZ and the Pacific.

**If you are interested in joining the committee and contributing to the organization of the webinars and later workshop, please contact us at [caringforcountry.web@gmail.com](mailto:caringforcountry.web@gmail.com).**

Our thanks to Jaye Cook, Associate Member of Australia ICOMOS and Member of the Caring For Country Committee, for designing the graphics, logo, and templates for newsletter and presentations for the Caring For Country Webinar Series.

